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*Queries*, 4th Series, vol. 9, p. 381 (1872), and by me in *Modern Philology*, vol. I, no. 2; this is directly followed, foll. 249b to 251b, by a poem in four-beat couplets headed by Shirley as an amorous ballad by Lydgate made at the departing of Thomas Chaucer, of which there is another copy in the Shirley codex Ashmole 59. The Add. copy is printed by Furnivall, *loc. cit. Notes and Queries*. Lydgate's poem on the doubleness of women follows, from fol. 252a to 253b; then the same poet's "Valentine," which I expect to print shortly, from fol. 253b to 254b; after this comes a "Complaynt Lydegate," to 256a, with four lines of Latin on the lower part of the same page; there follows upon this the short poem which Professor Skeat has declared Chaucerian, and printed as No. xxiii of the Minor Poems, "A Balade of Complaynt." The last number in the codex is the remainder of Chaucer's *Anelida*.

The text of the poem on 244a and b follows:—

[f. 244 a.]

BALADE

Hit is no right alle oþer lustes to leese  
 pis moneþe of *May* for missyng of on cas  
 per fore I wol þus my chaunce cheese  
 Ageyns *love* / *trey* ageyns an as  
 Hasard a tout and launche an esy pas  
 In lowe cuntrey þer as hit may not greve  
 þus holde I bett / þan labour as a reve

[f. 244 b.]

Sith hit is so þer as hit may not freese  
 þat euery wight but I haþe sume solas  
 I wol me venge on *lous* as doþe a *breesse*  
 On wyld horsse þat rennen in harras  
 fför maugre *love* amidde in his cumpas  
 I wol conclude my lustes to releue  
 þus holde I bett þan labour as a *Reve*

Yit might I seyne cryst seeyne as whan men sneese  
 If I hade leve to hunt in euery chace  
 Or fisshen and so myn angle leese  
 þat *Barbell* had swolowed boþe hooke and lace  
 Yit launche a steerne and put at suche purchase  
 To fonde to dompe als deepe as man may dyeve  
 þus holde I bett / þan labour as a *Reeve*

Another copy of this brief poem is in the manuscript Harley 7578, an entirely miscellaneous volume whose contents are arbitrarily thrown together by the binder, like Harley 78. The twenty leaves of this codex which concern Chaucerian students are filled with a series of poems by both

Chaucer and Lydgate, as well as some coarse bits apparently by neither, and are written in a small stiff late fifteenth or early sixteenth-century hand, frequently without marks of authorship or even sharp divisions between the poems. The text is usually inferior to other copies; and when the relation of these leaves to Cleopatra D VII and Addit. 22139 is worked out it will probably be seen that no one of the three is of independent value. In the case of the poem just above, the Harley copy is even more unintelligible than that of Shirley, and the lines still more irregular. Compare with the poem the *Complaint of Mars*, ll. 236 ff.

It may be added, for clearness' sake, that fol. 245a of the Shirley codex has no running title, and that on 244a the heading of the two "balades by Halsham esquier" is written so high that no other running title appears. It seems to me that the poem meant by Shirley's heading is the second, the Plowman's Song, to which it appears to me unnecessary to attribute coarse meaning; but I shall be glad of comment from those more familiar with Shirley's manuscripts and with the true Chaucerian flavor in medieval verse.

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# ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS THE SIMPLIFICATION OF FRENCH ORTHOGRAPHY.

A year ago last summer, four members of the "Conseil de l'Instruction publique"—Messrs. Bernes, Devinat, Clairin, Belot, signed a petition asking the body to which they belong to inaugurate further progress towards the simplification of French orthography. They expressed the wish that a committee be appointed, which should meet representatives of the French Academy, already selected for the purpose. M. Chaumié, the present Minister of Public Instruction, examined the request in March, 1903, and a few weeks later appointed a "Comité de réforme." M. Gaston Paris was to preside, but his death prevented this. To the petition mentioned was added a list of six

reforms, as to the advisability of which the signers invited immediate discussion.

Here are the six points :

1. Francisation des mots d'origine étrangère qui sont définitivement entrés dans la langue et répondent à un besoin réel.

2. Unification de l'orthographe et accentuation entre mots d'une même famille.

3. Simplification des consonnes doubles PH, TH, RH, CH dur.

4. Simplification des consonnes dupliquées quand elles ont, pour tous les mots d'une même famille, entièrement disparu du meilleur usage de la prononciation, et qu'elles sont inutiles pour conserver, entre les mots français et les mots latins ou grecs dont ils sont dérivées, ces analogies de forme extérieure qui sont pour la mémoire de précieux auxiliaires.

5. Suppression des pluriels en X.

6. Substitution de l' I à l' Y du même son.

### I.

The reforms proposed in numbers 3, 5 and 6 are very sensible. They were advocated a long time ago, first by Didot, and then by Sainte-Beuve.

No. 3 proposes that it be permitted to write *filosofie*, like *fantaisie* and *flegme* (formerly *phantaisie*, *phlegme*)—*téâtre* like *trône* and *trésor* (formerly *thrône*, *thrésor*)—*réteur*, like *rétime* and *rapsode* (formerly *rhétine*, *rhapsode*)—*arcange* like *école* and *mécanique* (formerly *échole*, *mêchanique*).

There are precedents in all these cases except one: the Greek *TH* has never been changed into a simple *T* before a vowel, though the change has taken place before a consonant: *trône*, but *théâtre*, *épithète*, *épithalame*. It seems legitimate, however, that, since a *PH* has become *F* before a vowel (*firole*, formerly *phirole*), a *TH* might become a *T* under similar conditions.

In the case of *CH* replaced by *C*, there would be a positive advantage aside from the simplification in the spelling; namely, that *CH* would be definitely reserved for the soft sound *ch* like *échange*, and *C* for the guttural sound as in *caractère*. Under the present rules, cases like *archange* and *échange*, *chaldéen* and *chahumeau*, *archiépiscopal* and *archiprêtre*, *choléra* and *colère* are likely to breed confusion.

In *chœur* it may be found convenient to retain the *ch* in order to distinguish it from *cœur*, though the context ought to be sufficient indication, just as it is found to be in cases like *livre*, book, and *livre*, pound, or *lacs*, lakes, and *lacs*, snares.

No. 5 rids us of the plural in *X*, a change which is all the more reasonable since now we know positively that the introduction of *x* instead of *s* to denote the plural was the result of mere ignorance. The sign  $\infty$  meant in the Middle Ages *-us*; thus the plural *animaus* was written *animaco*; this  $\infty$  was taken for an *X*; a *u* was thought to be missing, and supplied; whence *animaux*. (See Brunot, *Grammaire historique*, § 26). The same is true of *cheveux*, *eaux*, *travaux*, etc. The reform will not only do away with a number of exceptions to the general rule, but with the exceptions to the exceptions as well, such as *landaus*, *bleus*.

No. 6 also is a very legitimate demand. The etymological spelling for *cristal*, *asile*, *chimie*, long ago disappeared. So why not spell also *mistère*, *analyse*, *hipocrisie*? The *y* would be retained—if we understand the project correctly—whenever it stands between two pronounced vowels, and is thus equal to *i-i*; as, *ayant*, *effrayé*, pronounced *ai-iant*, *effrai-ié*. At any rate, this is a rule which could not be changed without a distinct loss to the language. The present usage is strictly in accordance with the pronunciation and, by common consent, has established itself everywhere. In the case of the verb we find it very clearly illustrated. In verbs in *-yer*, the *y* is changed into *i*, whenever followed by a silent *e*; *je paie*, *nous paierons*, but *nous payons*, *payé*. Vice versa verbs in *-ire*, and such in *-ir* as were originally in *-IRE*, change *i* into *y* before a sounded vowel, whenever the stem ends with a vowel: *fuir*, *nous fuyons*; *voir*, *voyez*; *croire*, *croyant*; while again, verbs like *prier* and *rire*, give *priions*, *riions*.

The only exception to this rule that *y = i-i* only when it is between two vowels, is *pays = pai-is*. The spelling *pais* (like *païen* used simultaneously with *payen*) would not represent the sound wanted. It would hardly do, on the other hand, to pronounce *pais*,—therefore, the *y* is necessary here. To-day the tendency appears to be to pronounce *païsan païsage* (instead of *pai-isan pai-isage*) re-

placing the *pai-i*, by only a slight accentuation and lengthening of the syllable. Therefore it may be that the pronunciation of the compounds will in the long run react on the primitive simple word, and *pais*, pronounced long, be one day correct.

## II.

The promoters of the new reform are perhaps not so well inspired in the other points brought forward; namely, 1, 2 and 4.

The edict of February 26th, 1901, provides that the words of foreign origin which are "tout-à-fait entrés dans la langue française" may now all form the plural regularly; that is, by adding an *s*. The first proposition of the project under discussion favors a further and more radical step; namely, that the words belonging to this group receive a French form throughout. According to M. A. Renard, the distinguished advocate of the reform (*La Revue*, July 15, 1902), expressions like *meeting*, *spleen*, *whist*, *steamer*, *clown*, *groom*, ought to be transformed into *mitigne*, *spline*, *oviste*, *stimeur*, *cloune*, *groume*, just as in the past *bollwerk*, *landsknecht*, *saebel*, *schoppen*, *bowling green*, *packet boat*, *riding coat*, *beefsteak*, *roast beef* have become *boulevard*, *lansquenet*, *sabre*, *échoppe*, *boulingrin*, *paquebot*, *redingote*, *biftec*, *rosbif*.

The authors of the reform make only two reservations to their proposition, reservations which appear at first to be very innocent, but which are actually of great importance. How is one to tell whether a word is "définitivement entré dans la langue"? Is the length of time since its introduction to be the criterion? M. Renard suggests that it mean the words accepted by the French Academy. This is an easy way for the reformers to get rid of the difficulty; but what about the Academy? There is a point which seems worthy of notice; namely, that the Academy has to meet differently the problem of adoption of foreign terms to-day from the way it met it in the past. Formerly, these terms came in by way of oral intercourse, but at present it is almost always by the written language (newspapers, magazines and books) that they spread. Formerly, they were introduced rather by the lower classes, to-day by the cultivated classes—which means that, while in the past they were the result of ignorance, they betray at present, in most cases, a conscious effort

to show one's knowledge of other tongues. A proof of this will be found in the fact that many people nowadays pay no attention to the decision of the Academy in 1798 and 1835. To write *rosbif* and *biftec*, they spell and say *roastbeef* and *beefsteak*; it will be seen also that there is a pronounced tendency to pick out just those English words which are most striking to the average French ear: *high-life*, *five o'clock*, *steeple chase*, etc. Therefore, if all these new words are made to look French, those who introduced them will not care to recognize them any more.

This leads us to the second reservation expressed in the text of the reformers. They speak of "mots qui répondent à un besoin réel." In fact, except words designating products of other countries, such as *banane*, we do not know of a single case where this is true. Instead of *rosbif*, French people may just as well say *bœuf rôti*; instead of *biftec*, *bœuf grillé*; instead of *steamer*, *bateau à vapeur*; instead of *meeting*, *réunion*; instead of *spleen*, *mélancolie*; instead of *gentleman*, *gentilhomme*, etc. They use them with the conscious purpose of employing foreign expressions. Therefore, if reform is introduced, there will be a quantity of doublets, while those persons who are fond of using foreign words will introduce new expressions which are not French in appearance.

But granting for a moment that the course proposed might be easily adopted in theory, what about the practice? M. Renard, as we have seen, suggests words like *groume* for *groom*, *mitigne* for *meeting*, *cloune* for *clown*, *stimeur* for *steamer*. Evidently he considers these words "définitivement entrés dans la langue." Now, *groume* is the only one among them that might be unanimously adopted. We have always heard *métingue* or *mitinnque*, *cla-oune*,<sup>1</sup> *stiemeur* or *stimeur* (first syllable long). We do not maintain in the least that we have heard a more correct pronunciation, but

<sup>1</sup> It might be that *cloune* is a misprint in M. Renard's article. We have noticed that his examples are taken generally from Larousse, and there we have *cla-oune*. But even in this case there would be a difficulty. The rule is now that when three vowels follow one another in a word the first is dropped in pronunciation: *Sœur*, *œuvre*, *vœu*, *aôti*, *saoul*, an exception being made only in the case of diphthongs like *ui* or when the word begins with *ou*, the German or English *u*. Thus, *claoune* would be = *cloune* in pronunciation.

only that disagreement is possible, and that there is absolutely no way to settle such a dispute except by authority. A number of distinguished scholars all over Europe are now having endless discussions regarding the pronunciation of genuine French words (Nyrop, Passy and others); if agreement is so difficult for French words, how would it be possible to agree on the French pronunciation of English or German terms?

Finally, even if an agreement could be reached in regard to pronunciation, there might be some hope of agreeing upon spelling. But this again is doubtful. We have mentioned *stimeur*. Good authorities may be satisfied with the *sti*-short. But no one, we think, will pronounce *spleen*, short; however, M. Renard proposes *spline*—which ought by analogy to be pronounced like *fine*, *mine*, *liera*—while certainly *spliene* would be more correct, by analogy with *liera*, *maniement*, *ralliement*, or at least *spline*, the circumflex conveying also the idea of the long pronunciation, though not as regularly as *ie*; (see *tôt*, *châtain*, *ci-gît*, where the  $\wedge$  merely marks the disappearance of an *s*).

It would be still easier to show the weakness of this proposition of the reformers, with words not quoted by M. Renard. What is to be done with words like *high-life*, if it were ever “entré définitivement dans la langue.” Besides the regular English pronunciation which would give *hai-laïfe* (or *ai-laïf*), you positively hear *ieg-lief*, or *ig-lif*, or still *ige-life*. If one needs not decide with regard to *high-life*, it will probably have to be done with regard to *highlander*, which is already in Larousse, whence, as we have said, M. Renard has taken his examples. He has been careful, however, not to mention words like *ai-lenn-deur*.

Everything impels us to the conclusion that this proposition brings up too many delicate and subtle questions, to be approached by reforms—even if it be only to ask authorization to adopt, or not to adopt, such and such a spelling.

No. 2 appears at first sight a very sensible reform, but again when it comes to the application of the principle, difficulties at once present themselves. The proposal is this: *Unification de l'orthographe et de l'accentuation entre mots d'une même famille*.

M. Renard begins his comment on this point with the following paragraph:

“Ici une réserve s'impose . . . . Il en est des mots comme des individus: le fils ne ressemble pas toujours au père, ni le neveu à l'oncle. En passant du primitif au dérivé, un son se modifie souvent: l' *e* de *sel* se change en *a* dans *salière*; l' *e* de *mer* en *a* dans *marin*; l' *a* de *parfait* en *e* dans *perfection*; la diphtongue *oi* de *foire* en *o* dans *forain*; le son nasal *ain* de *grain* en *e* dans *grenier*; celui de *pain* en *a* dans *pannetier*; l' *e* ouvert de *mystère*, en *e* fermé dans *mystérieux*; l' *e* muet ou plutôt l' *e* sourd de *rebelle*, *tenace*, *religieux* en *e* fermé dans *rébellion*, *ténacité*, *irreligieux*; l' *o* long de *côte* en *o* bref dans *coteau*; la langue se transforme d'un mot à l'autre, l'air de famille s'en va. Quelquefois même certains sons apparaissent dans le dérivé qui n'existent même pas dans le son primitif: le son *s* de *bestial*, *forestier*, *apostolat*, son qui ne se perçoit nullement dans *bête*, *forêt*, *apôtre*. La parenté la plus proche n'exclut pas la différence dans les sons: on dit *je meurs* avec *eu*, mais nous *mourons* avec *ou*; *je bois* avec *oi*, mais nous *buons* avec *u*.”

This pretty well settles the question. If a fervent advocate of the cause recognizes such difficulties as insuperable, others need hardly discuss them. Moreover, M. Renard does not quote a single example where the principle would apply. The example of *coléra* and *catéchumène* fall under another heading (No. 4, which we have already discussed), they do not belong to the same family as *bête*, *bestial*; *foire*, *forain*, etc. Others like *orchestre* and *orchidée* = *orkestre*, *orkidée*, or *orquestre*, *orquidée* also belong elsewhere. *Orchestre* and *orchestral* conform with the principle, and it was an unhappy idea to try to model them on *monarque*, which belongs to the same family as *monarchie* and *monarchique*. Since one could not spell *monarkique* or *monarquique* (both being against the pronunciation), one could only bring unity by spelling *monarch*. But to this again M. Renard could not agree, for he proposes elsewhere that *ch* be from now on reserved for the soft *ch* and *c* for the guttural sound: *échange*, *arcange* (see above).

The unification of accentuation in words of the same family would be a very bad thing. One of the few rules without exception in French is that the medial *e* is *acute* before a (voiced) syllable, and *grave* before a mute or silent syllable; thus, *collège* but *collégien*, *mystère* but *mystérieux*, *achète*, etc. Would it be easier to apply this very simple rule, or to have to ponder, before you put an accent on an *e*, over the question whether there is

not perhaps some brother, or sister, or cousin word which permits you to disregard it? Here again, we should decide for the *statu quo*.

No. 4. Similar considerations will guide us with regard to the fourth proposition of the reformers. What criterion, satisfactory to all, have we to ascertain whether a double consonant has really "entièrement disparu du meilleur usage de la prononciation"? M. Renard himself quotes Ch. Lebaigue's scholarly book on "La Réforme de l'orthographe et l'Académie française."

"A en croire Didot on articule *a-teindre* et *at-taquer*. Suivant M. Gazier, on prononce *a-pauvrir* et *ap-pliquer*. Là où Darmesteter figure *tyra-neau*, Littré et bien d'autres figurent *tyran-neau*. A son tour Littré indique, on ne sait pourquoi, les notations disparates *na-rer*, *inêna-rable*, et *nar-ration*, *nar-rateur*, *para-tèle* et *paral-laxe*, *admi-ston* et *admis-sible*, *co-menter* et *com-mentaire*, *tè-reur* et *ter-rible*, *gra-mairien* et *gram-matiste*, *di-section* et *dis-séquer*. . ."

Other examples will be found in the remarkable *Manuel de phonétique du français parlé*, by Dr. Nyrop (Copenhagen, Paris, Leipzig, 1902), published a year ago. See also the recent work *L'e connu sous le nom général et souvent impropre d'e muet* by J. Genlis. We ourselves have called attention to several cases in an article in *Mod. Lang. Notes* for December, 1900.

The reverence for etymology shown in the text of the project, is very courteous, but very unsatisfactory. If concessions must be made they should be for the benefit of the great mass of the public, which does not draw much benefit from etymology. Moreover, nowadays we are threatened with a constant diminution of the cultivated public: how many, ten years from now, will know enough Latin or Greek to find help in them for their French spelling? The Classical languages have to make room for more modern subjects of instruction, and since spelling has to yield to the general pressure, let it follow the tendency of the day and give up elements that can be of benefit only to a very small number of people. Since the reformers discard etymology when they deal with German and English words (see our remarks under No. 1), it appears somewhat inconsistent for them to advocate its claims here.

Even if we are willing to pass over the first difficulty and limit ourselves strictly to consider-

ations of spelling, it may be seriously questioned whether the reform suggested is a real improvement. We borrow most of our examples from M. Renard, thus meeting the reformers on their chosen battle-ground.

First, the much discussed *millionième* with one *n*, and *millionnaire* with two *n*'s. They pretend to simplify by unification, we maintain that they complicate. While they are doing away with one apparent anomaly, they create very real complications elsewhere. The rule for the formation of the ordinal adjective is: add *-ième* to the cardinal: *deux-ième*, *trois-ième*, *vingt-ième*, *cent-ième*, thus *million-ième*. If you were to change so as to make the latter have two *n*'s, like *million-naire* you get rid, it is true, of a divergence between two cognate words, but at the same time you create an exception in the ordinal numbers. One exception disappears, another appears. Where is the gain? The suggestion may, then, be made: if *million-ième* with one *n* is right, then drop one of the two *n*'s of *millionnaire*. Unhappily, this is impossible without causing just the same trouble as if you were to add another *n* to *millionième*; for, all the words in *onnaire* have two *n*'s, *légionnaire*, *tortionnaire*, *dictionnaire*, *fonctionnaire*, etc.; we notice that even *débonnaire*, which is not derived from the latin *-arius* (*-aire*), but is a word made up of *de-bon-air* has adopted a double *n* so as to avoid creating an exception among the words in *-onnaire*. Suppose, therefore, that the student learns that both the words under consideration take one *n*, he will think the matter easy at this point; but when he reaches the suffixes he will find an exception there instead. We repeat, what is gained? It might seem wise to drop the *nn* in all words ending in *-onnaire*. But aside from the fact that some people who may claim to possess "le meilleur usage" may object to it, there is something else in the way. If the student is taught that the words in *-onnaire* have only one *n*, it will look to him very much like an exception if he compares it with *constitutionnel*, *traditionnel*. Shall we go further still? What about *raisonnable*, *raisonneur*, *raisonner*, *raisonnement*? If we get rid of this usage also we have to face the feminine of all words in *-on*, *-onne* (if not those in *-en*, *-enne*), *bon*, *bonne*; *luron*, *luronne*; *baron*, *baronne*. It is true that the last word suggests *baronie*, with

one *n*. But, again, this is no exception, *baronie* follows the rule that the *n* is simple before *i* in the last syllable: *ironie*, *félonie*, *infini*. Here, however, there is an exception: *honnir*, which could very well be reformed without creating another exception. It is possible that the usual pronunciation would allow this.

The result of our discussion is, that unless you decree or "grant permission" (however you may choose to call it), that the double *n* disappear everywhere, you will get into endless trouble.

The origin of the difficulty, we believe, must be traced to the notion of class relation which is frequently introduced in the wrong place, or, at least, is not applied correctly. Grammatically speaking, the word *millionième* belongs to the class of the ordinal numbers, and not to the class of *millionnaire*, and *vice versa* the latter belongs to the suffix family in *-onnaire*. We may hope that the superficial nature of the contrary point of view has been made clear, and as we have been guilty of the confusion ourselves in our article in *Mod. Lang. Notes* for December, 1900, we take advantage of this opportunity to offer here our *peccavi*.

The same misuse of grammar category is evident with regard to the two terms derived from *dix*: *dixième* and *dizaine*. Of course one will think at first that according to pronunciation *dixième* ought to be like *dizaine* = *dizième*. But 1) this would mean an exception to the general rule: add *-ième* to the cardinal . . . or rather three exceptions, for, if you decide for *dizième*, you will have to decide for *deuzième* and *sizième*<sup>2</sup> and 2) especially, instead of bringing unity in the family or class grouping, it would on the contrary produce a greater lack of harmony than before: a double offspring instead of one would disregard the parent *dix*. Nor have we even the resource of proposing to spell *dice* as pronounced, for *dicième* is only worse than *dicaine* with regard to pronunciation. To write *dise* would not fulfil the requirements either, since *s* between two vowels is pronounced *z*. Nobody says *dize*.

What about *dizaine* changed into *dixaine*? It could be done as far as cardinal and ordinal adjectives are concerned; but if this orthography be adopted the word will rank as an exception since

*x* between two vowels is always pronounced like *ks*: *rixe*, *luxure*, *maxillaire*, *fixait*.<sup>3</sup> So the very best that can happen will be the substitution of an exception in pronunciation for an exception in orthography, a very slight advantage indeed. Unless one proceeds to an entire change in the value and meaning of letters, there are certain to be irregularities somewhere, and it has been seen that the present system has the minimum of them.

Let us take a third example given by M. Renard. He proposes to unify the spelling in *morsure* with *s*, and *morceau* with *c*.

On the one hand, *morsure* cannot become *morgure* for: 1) except *gergure*, words in which *-ure* is preceded by a sibilant have an *s* and not a *c*: *fissure*, *tonsure*, *frisure*, *censure*. Why should we add another exception to *gergure*? 2) If we apply the family-criterion, the family consonant is certainly an *s* rather than a *c*. *s* appears (together with *d*), not only in the Latin *morsura*, *morsum* (and *mordere*), but in French too, *je mors*. A *c* is never found. Moreover, if you write *morgure* the lack of harmony will nevertheless remain on account of the noun *le mors*, 'the bit', which cannot be spelt *morc*. *Morc* would indeed be in accordance with *morceau* and eventually *morgure*, but as the pronunciation would then become *mor-c*, like *ture*, it would never do. *Mord* with a *d* would not solve the difficulty, for it would again differ from both *morsure* and *morceau*.

On the other hand, *morceau* cannot become *morseau*, for all the words in which *-eau* is preceded by a consonant have a *c*: *oiseau*, but *arceau*, *cerceau*, *berceau*, *monceau*, *lionceau*.

"Même absurdité à écrire essence et confidence avec un *c*, mais essentiel et confidentiel avec un *t*, alors qu'on écrit avec un *c* circonstance et circonstanciel." We beg to disagree with this statement of "absurdity." Again we find the misplaced family relation: the nouns mentioned could of course not be spelt *-te*, for *-te* is never pronounced *ce*; but *ti* = *ci*, which we find in the adjectives referred to, occurs constantly when it is placed before a vowel, *transition*, *partialité*, *chrestomatie*, etc.) and offers no difficulty whatever. Besides,

<sup>2</sup> It is fair to remark here that the reformers spell *deus* instead of *deux*.

<sup>3</sup> *Soixante* = *soissante* is an exception, where the *x* is still further away from the original sound *x* than the *s* would be, and, in fact, is in *dixième*.

if the petition is granted, there may be more of a "family air" between *confidence* and *confidenciel*, but at the same time the similarity will be lost between *confidentiel* and *confident*. Thus, it may well be questioned whether it would not be preferable to ask that *circonstanciel*—this *rarum nans in gurgite vasto*—be spelt on the pattern of *confidentiel* instead of the reverse; in other terms, that the exception be made to follow the rule, and not words following a wide-spread rule made to follow the exception. Moreover, if you spell *-ciel* instead of *-tiel* in these words, why not also replace the *t* by a *c* in cases like *partiel* and *partialité*, which would create an odd divergence between these two and *part*, *partir*, *partie*, *particulier*, etc. Why not change all the words in *tion*? But this would produce a bad disagreement between *réfectoire* and *réfection*, *instructeur* and *instrucción*, *multiplicateur* and *multiplicación*, *dérogateur* and *dérogación*, etc.

We know that such sweeping changes are rather discouraged by the reformers themselves. But why, if this is so, do they propose measures of such revolutionary character? And why do the authors of new projects for reform continue to expose themselves to these criticisms? It actually looks sometimes as if they thought it their task to create new exceptions in spelling rather than to do away with those at present existing.

There is one reason which partly explains some of the surprising statements of the reformers. They judge things exclusively from the child's standpoint. Of course youth is especially concerned in the learning of grammars; the latter are generally written for them, and therefore a number of perfectly regular linguistic phenomena are formulated as exceptions; the reason for this is that it would take too long to explain the whole case and at the same time it might overtax the brain of the pupil. To the rule: "The ordinal number is formed by adding *-ième* to the cardinal" one adds: "except in *neuf* when the *f* has to be changed into *v*." In fact there is no exception at all. On the contrary we have here simply the application of one of the most frequent rules of French grammar; namely, that when final *f* is followed by a vowel it is changed into *v*, the voiceless becomes voiced: *bref*, *brève*, *brièveté*; *vif*, *vive*, *vivacité*; *neuf*, *neuve*—thus *neuf*, *neuvième*.

Such cases occur constantly, and, indeed, one does not see why reformers should not sometimes take into account adults as well as children. More than this: it is our firm belief—the result of several years' experience in the class-room—that most grammarians are so careful not to overtax the child's brain that they *undertax* it most decidedly. The trouble with most grammars, that which makes them to be heartily disliked by pupils, is probably due first of all to the fact that they suggest exceptions everywhere, while very often, one might just as well appeal to the reasoning powers of the child.

Good orthography results from a purely mechanical and automatic process. Without conscious thought an adult will bring together such cases as *brève*, *vive*, *neuve* and naturally write *neuvième*; by the spontaneous action of his brain he will write *collège* with a grave, and *collégien* with an acute accent, *millionième* with one *n* and *millionnaire* with two *n*'s; *croire*, *croyant*, but *rire*, *riant*, and so forth. It is when one begins to reflect over a case that one ceases to write correctly, for then such misleading analogies as *millionième* and *millionnaire* actually present themselves. Conscious reason builds up the habit, but, once formed, the habit does more accurate work than reason could. This is an everyday experience, which is probably the cause why our reformers forget to take it into account.

The danger is, therefore, that the advocates of reform may allow themselves to be carried too far; that they sacrifice the more general principles of orthography, regulating a great number of words, to the cheap pleasure of more apparent similarity between two individual terms. In so doing they only succeed in taking from us the very foundation of the unconscious process which renders orthography possible. Confusion would necessarily prevail and in consequence of such action uniform writing and spelling would become a dream for adults as it is now for children. Is this desirable?

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